

# *Ayotzinapa is a tragedy that wounds Mexico*

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By María Josefina Arce

Nine years ago, Mexican society was shocked. Forty-three normalista students from Ayotzinapa disappeared in Iguala, Guerrero state. A case in which local, federal, police, army and organized crime authorities joined forces to hide the truth.

It is known with certainty that the official version of the tragedy, which occurred under the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto of the PRI, Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party, was fabricated.

Federal authorities at the time spread the theory that the young men were murdered, their bodies incinerated in a nearby landfill and their ashes dumped in a river.

That theory, known as "The Historical Truth, was based on torture, falsehoods and illegalities. It was disproved by investigators and neighbors of the place, who in their testimonies assured that in those days it rained intensely so it would have been impossible to light such a big bonfire.

It has become clear that for years the government presided by Peña Nieto lied, covered up and carried out false proceedings on the case.

The arrival to the presidency in December 2018 of Andrés Manuel López Obrador gave a boost to the investigations to clarify the crime, a priority of the president.

With this objective in mind, two days after taking office he created a Truth and Access to Justice Commission, a demand that the relatives of the young people had presented years ago.

In 2019, López Obrador's government appointed a special prosecutor for the case and in January 2020 decided to reinstate the Independent Group of International Experts to continue the investigations.

The president has also met on several occasions with the families of the missing students, something that Peña Nieto never did.

In one of his regular morning conferences, López Obrador reiterated his government's willingness to investigate in the spirit of finding out everything, whoever falls.

The Ayoitnapa case has wounded Mexican society. Nine years later, even with the impetus given to the investigations, paralyzed for a long time, the whereabouts of the young normalistas are still unknown.

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